



## National Archaeology Days ARTEFACTS ROADSHOW 20th July 2003

Appleby Archaeology Group supported National Archaeology Day this year with a successful event at the Market Hall, Appleby. Around 50 people attended visiting a number of displays on local archaeology and to consult with local experts. Six items were brought in for examination including a fine possible Roman sword pommel end with blue enamel (from Keswick), a heavy Roman javelin (from Wem in Shropshire) and a fine fossilized tree fern from Crosby Garrett. Dr David Shotter spent the afternoon cataloging a local detectorist's coin collection and Penrith Museum brought in a display. We also ran the slide show in the corner of the hall.

The day provided an opportunity to discuss local archaeology and share information which is what a group like ours is all about!

Many thanks to those members of the group who spent a great deal of time organising this event and producing the displays.



*Roman sword pommel end from Keswick*

Industrial archaeology is not everyone's cup-of-tea but part of its fascination is that it is possible on many sites to combine excavation with with copious records and provide startling displays and working models. In addition, many sites date from before the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and their development is entwined with and cannot be separated from the social history of the area and the country. So it is with the Nenthead Mines where the workings extent over 100 miles of tunnels of which some 40 miles are still accessible today, accessible that is to those who love to burrow about underground. We however, were quite happy with our conducted tour of the part of the mine open to visitors. Our guide was patient although a little cautious in answering questions on geology because he thought we were geologists! But he gave a lucid explanation of how the mineral veins were exploited and the how the miners followed the course up and down for thousands of yards. Compared with coal mining, the conditions for the ore miners were good, there was solid rock, no methane gas and the mines were driven horizontally along the veins.

On the surface much has been achieved in uncovering the processing floors and several buildings have been restored to house the inevitable interactive displays with which no modern museum is com-

plete. The biggest toys on the site and no less interesting for that, are the full size water wheels, part of the Power of Water display. Here you can pull levers that release water to turn the various devices – undershot, overshot, backshot wheels and a bucket hoist – these drive hammers, stampers and a generator which powers the lights on the stand.

Equally dramatic is the Brewery Shaft, a 380 foot deep shaft built to ventilate the Nenthead Level, a 5 mile long drainage channel that runs to Alston, press a button and the shaft lights come on in sequence downwards mimicking a falling stone – disappointedly there was no splash as the virtual stone hit the water.

Nenthead Mines is a huge site, there is lots of archaeology still to be uncovered and many surface remains to explore and explain. The village of Nenthead reflects the social history of the mine and the paternal attitude of its owners – they built a school and insisted children attended, they gave land for chapels and a church, built a Reading Room and provided a shop and stores. To understand the whole context of mining on Alston Moor takes more than an afternoon and what we saw whetted appetites for more so many thanks to Martin Joyce for organising our visit to one of the great historical industrial sites of Cumbria.

Harry Hawkins

## Nenthead Lead Mines Group visit 24th May 2003

### Contents:

PAGE 2: Early Christianity in Cumbria

PAGE 3: Archaeology in the Lake District National Park

PAGE 4: Autumn Events



# Early Christianity in Cumbria

A talk by Prof. John Todd

At the March meeting of the Appleby Archaeology Group Dr John Todd spoke about Early Christianity in Cumbria from the early 4th century to the arrival of the Normans in 1092. The first known list of churches was in 1292 when 130 were listed. Dr Todd provided evidence to support the idea that at least half of the churches known in 1292 were there before 1092.

He talked of three periods each influenced by a different culture, Roman (c.300-c.600), Anglo Saxon (c.600-c.900) and Viking (c.900-1092) and considered the evidence for Christianity from written records, place names, sculptures and other archaeological remains. He advised that evidence from the lives of saints, except that of St Cuthbert, is not reliable and that holy wells and curvilinear churchyards do not help in dating places of worship.

In 313 Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. A number of written records refer to Christian communities in Britain, including one which tells of three bishops from Britain attending The Council of Arles in 314. In the 5th century there are references to the crushing of pelagianism, a doctrine which denied the catholic concept of original sin, and from the writing of Gildas, a Briton, and Saint Patrick we learn that there was a functioning ecclesiastical hierarchy in the late 5th to mid 6th century. Bede, writing later, records, that at this time there was a large community of monks living south of Chester.

There is good archaeological evidence of 5th and 6th century Christianity from Dumfries and Galloway including stones found at Whithorn and Kilmadine. These stones have mark-

ings indicating literacy and Christian beliefs. The Latinus Stone at Whithorn is dated to 450 and the road to the sanctuary there is dated to no later than 500. The number of early Christian sites in this area suggest, to some, that foundations were set up by the pelagianists banished from south of "The Wall".

The evidence in Cumbria is sparse. In Carlisle there is a stone to Flavius Antigonius with an inscription which infers that he was Christian, and a stone with the chi-rho mark was found in Maryport but only an engraving of it remains. The orientation of St Cuthbert's in Carlisle to Blackfriar Street, a main thoroughfare in Roman times, suggests that it stands on the site of a very early church. Place names such as Ecclelrigg and Eaglesfield which include derivations of the Latin ecclesia indicate the site an early church. Dr Todd said that although the evidence for Christianity was sparse there was even less for paganism in the 300 years after the Romans.

From the 600s the Anglo Saxon kingdom of Northumbria was the main influence in Cumbria. In 627 the Northumbrian court is said to have been converted to Christianity by Paulinus but a strong influence was also coming from the religious community on Lindisfarne.

Evidence for Christian communities in Cumbria includes Bede's account of monasteries at Carlisle and Dacre. The archaeology from the Dacre site supports this as the findings point to a literate community living there in Saxon times. Further archaeological evidence is seen in fourteen stones of the 8th and 9th centuries, all of which are associated with churches. The

cross at Bewcastle is one of the finest and shows evidence of literacy. The Norse place name Kirby, a settlement by a church, suggests that their settlements grew up around established Anglo Saxon churches. The evidence of this period shows that in some parts of Cumbria there were minsters, communities of priests exercising pastoral care for the inhabitants over a wide area. Examples include Carlisle, Dacre, Kirby Stephen and Kendal.

In the Viking period the evidence comes from crosses, sculptures and architecture. Dr Todd suggested that the Viking's reputation for destroying churches was not entirely justified. There may have been some decay but during this time stone churches appear mainly in the Appleby area. Examples include those at Long Marton, Morland and Orton. The distribution of crosses and other sculptures of this period is widespread in the west and north of Cumbria. The outstanding example is the Gosforth Cross which is intact, and stands where it was originally erected. The iconography on the cross incorporates both Christian and pagan beliefs. The distribution of sculptures and churches points to an increase in local churches.

In conclusion Dr Todd said that the evidence shows that from Roman times Christianity was the faith of at least the rulers of Cumbria and that from the Anglo Saxon period onwards there were a number minsters providing the sacraments backed up by a growing number of local churches whose numbers increased after 900. It is likely that at least half of the 130 churches known in 1292 were in being by 1092.

Phyllis Rouston



## Archaeology in the Lake District National Park

### A conference report by Tricia Crompton

An enjoyable day was had by some members of the Appleby Archaeology Group at St Martin's College, Ambleside, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2002. A joint venture by the National Trust and the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) is hoped to become an annual event said Robert Maxwell, National Trust Archaeologist, in his introduction. A welcome came from David Thornton (Deputy Chairman LDNPA) saying that from a National Park perspective it's preservation and enjoyment was significant. The archaeology, however, reflects the Parks origins and can teach people about these. There are money restrictions but other local groups (like ourselves) can help with projects. John Hodgson (LDNPA archaeologist) asked the question 'Why hold a conference?' telling us that it presented the archaeology that was going on in the National Park, showing that it aids to foster the economy and social communities of the Park, an aim of the LDNPA. As only 20% of the Park area has been surveyed there is still much to do!

Lately the profile of the archaeology has been heightened by the finds of Neolithic Rock Art, crop marks, timber circles, burial monuments and an Iron Age sword. GPS is a particularly good tool to use in this varied, largely inaccessible terrain. The surveying by this method of the Haweswater estate resulted in the location of a prehistoric settlement. While at Conistone Crag a magnetometry survey located numerous bloomery sites. At the moment the National Park Authority have located 6298 sites.

This information can be used in assessing planning applications, repair of ancient barns and other partially extant buildings and conserving the vast number of industrial heritage sites in the Park. To get involved groups can enquire through LDNPA staff. The Authority can also help these groups with grants and can substantially fund joint projects with them in response to the LDNPA management plan.

Speaker Jamie Lund (National Trust Archaeologist) concentrates on historic landscape surveys. He uses sur-

vey and documentary evidence to identify, manage and develop cultural narrative. He says the landscape is layers of cultural activity and we must try and peel these back to understand and then manage them for the future. As an example Hartsop was an area where farmers also worked in industry. Here there are potash pits, lead mines, and slate workings. What is the purpose of this large area survey if not to tell us what we have in the landscape? Only by viewing the wider picture, he says, can we learn how to manage it. Surveys need to be carried out in depth, making sure that modern land use practices are not damaging the sites further.

Of the numerous stone circles known in Cumbria, little is known of most. Aaron Watson (University of Reading). They are hard to date and most remain unexcavated. He described a method of photographic panorama displaying patterns in break of slope associated with different designs and styles. I remain unconvinced as to his reasoning and look forward to better confirmation of his methodology.

Helen Loney (University of Glasgow) described the multi-funded Romano-British site at Glencoyne Park. Encompassing the Parishes of Hutton and Matterdale it covers various geologies and altitudes. She wanted to know if these factors affected where settlement occurred. A transect survey discovered 400 monuments including boundaries, clearance cairns, cairns, hut circles and low stone walls. It was a 'busy' landscape; carbon recovered being sent for dating. There seem to be periods of rebuild, probably covering the Bronze Age and Later prehistory through to the Roman period with 60-70cm of stratigraphy. This project is ongoing.

There followed several speakers dealing with the numerous industrial archaeological sites within the LDNP. Marcus Jeacock (English Heritage)

explained the complex series of adits and gills associated with the Roughton Gill metal ore mines in the Dalebeck valley. Identified phases run from 1390 to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Ore recovered would have supplied lead and maybe a small amount of silver associated with this vein, leaving vast spoil heaps in its wake. Robert Maxwell (with Peter Crew) described the bloomery project where iron smelting sites were identified along with slag heaps and charcoal. Of the 234 sites identified some were small but most occur next to ancient and semi-natural woodland. The ore was brought from the West and South-West and is located by use of magnetometry, a sound mapping method which operates like a magnet, so detecting magnetic materials. These could be smithing sites but there is also evidence of roasting hearths used to 'roast' the ore prior to iron extraction to remove a portion of the oxygen. These sites need to be dated to detect whether they are contemporary. Few use waterpower; wheelpits found dating from 1300-1500 and later.

Rachel Newman (Oxford Archaeology North) described the work of the unit in the Park. They discovered many bloomery sites after major survey work and desk based assessment. At the site of Galava, Ambleside, a multi-phased trench contained iron-working evidence. Further survey work resulted in the discovery of more bloomery sites at Hardknot. More lead mining with silver working was also highlighted.

The purpose of the day was served in that it brought to our attention the wide and varied range of sites within the National Park (and those that lie outside in much the same terrain). It remains a sad fact though that most of the work is carried out by organisations outside the area. Is it not time that this problem was addressed judging by the amount of archaeological work available in Cumbria?

(Apologies for the delay of this report due to limited space in the newsletter)

## AUTUMN EVENTS

### Archaeology of the Settle to Carlisle Railway

7.30 Tue 9th September  
Appleby Market Hall  
Supper Room

Peter Robinson will talk on the Archaeology of the Settle to Carlisle Railway. By looking at the archaeology left by the construction of the railway, Peter will shed light on the methods used - particularly around Ribble Head.

### Viking Settlement In the Lake District

7.30 Tue 14th October  
Appleby Market Hall  
Supper Room

The evidence for 'Viking' settlement will be presented by Steve Dickinson. A number of sites in the Lake District will be discussed where new farmsteads were apparently established during this period.

### Historic Landscape Survey at Hartsop

7.30 Tue 11th November  
Appleby Market Hall  
Supper Room

National Trust archaeologist. Jamie Lund will present his historic landscape survey of land at Hartsop in the Ullswater valley. Documentary and field research have been used to paint a

picture of the development of this area. (See the conference report in this edition).

### Roman Domestic Life in the Frontier Area

7.30 Tue 9th December  
Appleby Market Hall  
Supper Room

Georgina Plowright will present a picture of the domestic side of Roman Life near the frontier. Georgina is curator at the Corbridge and Chesters museums and will present some of the evidence from these and other sites.



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